



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
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**State of NM Announces Program to Boost DWI License Revocations**

SANTA FE -- Beginning January 1, the State of New Mexico will allow police officers the option of filing a detailed and signed affidavit instead of appearing in person at DWI license revocation hearings.

The initiative is intended to decrease the number of license revocations that are dismissed because the police officer was unable to attend the license revocation hearing, conducted by the Taxation and Revenue Department's hearing office. The Motor Vehicle Division will also propose legislation in January that would allow a hearing to be conducted by telephone or by video conference. The option to file a signed affidavit for the hearing is allowed under current law.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for police officers to attend these license revocation hearings and to provide the facts that must be introduced and considered," said Rachel O'Connor, Governor Bill Richardson's DWI Czar. "Paper affidavits and electronic hearings have worked well in other states, and we believe these steps will improve our process here in New Mexico." The MVD plans to initiate the paper affidavit option in January with State Police in Bernalillo and San Juan counties and then to expand the initiative statewide.

For the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2008, there were 18,847 arrests for drunk driving. Out of these, 12,791 licenses were automatically revoked since the driver didn't request a hearing. Of the 6,056 drivers who requested a hearing, 2,341 were dismissed when the police officer had a scheduling conflict. O'Connor said that New Mexico modeled its initiative after a successful program in the state of Washington. In that state, after allowing officer affidavits, the dismissal rate because of police non-attendance dropped significantly.

The license revocation hearings are separate from any criminal action related to the arrest, and the modifications proposed by MVD only apply to the administrative license revocation hearings and process.